

July 13, 2020

To Whom it may Concern,

The SEARHC Gustavus Clinic is deeply involved in COVID-19 preparations to provide care for those within the community of Gustavus.

Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, I have been meeting twice weekly with other providers within the SEARHC Care Network, as well as leadership. The clinic has been providing visits throughout the onset of COVID-19; these visits have been in many forms, including phone visits, virtual visits, office visits, parking lot visits, and home visits. As always, my goal is to provide the best care we possibly can within the limitations of our rural facility. We have been preparing and testing for COVID-19 since the onset of the epidemic, almost daily.

Detailed surge plans are in place for patients to be transported either to Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center in Sitka or to Juneau at Bartlett Regional Hospital, if they have COVID-19 symptoms, or if they chose, they can shelter in place.

In addition, we have been responsible for training individuals providing COVID-19 testing at the Gustavus airport, preparing for travelers to the State of Alaska. We were able to organize and test all first-line responders, EMTs, frontline park employees, and a few members of the hospice and respite group for FIT testing, to ensure they had the appropriate fit for an N-95 respirator mask to aid in limiting exposure to COVID-19 if it should occur. Approximately 25 people were fit tested. We are currently in the process of trying to set up asymptomatic testing within the Gustavus community. This testing will take place on the weekends, likely Saturdays, until December.

We have also been working consistently with the ICS team on the City level, and I have been in contact weekly with our Fire Chief concerning COVID-19. I also have attended town hall meetings regarding COVID-19, still is available online through the city website.

From a community health/public health standpoint, stopping the spread of COVID-19 will happen by limiting the transmission of the virus itself. As mentioned before, please refer to the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services for mandate recommendations. If you need additional information, please refer to the CDC regarding the latest safety protocol. Additional resources are available at covid19.searhc.org.

Our main priority remains the health and safety of our patients and staff. If you have specific concerns regarding your healthcare and COVID-19 questions, please feel free to set up an appointment, and we can discuss this in detail.

Stay safe, Gustavus!

Lisa LaGrange FNP